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BOOK REVIEWS.

ALTHOUGH it may seem late in the day, yet up to this time we have not before seen Charles Egbert Craddock's "In the Tennessee Mountains," published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. Approaching the volume with the natural obstinacy of human thinking, which often instinctively prejudices itself against a too-much praised writer, we read story after story of this collection with an ever-growing impression of the talent, scope, vocabulary, observations, sympathy and unalterable melancholy of Miss Murfree's soul. Very few, if any, authors of the past twenty years, show such powers of description, such quaint, striking, exquisite touches in scenery, or such a keen intuition of the meaning of plants, hills, sweeps of air, winds, light, clouds, forests and flowers, to the general landscape. Nor do we find among modern novelists so harmonious an association of these elements of material beauty with the existence and tendency of human life among them. The volume opens up a new theatre of action, an original surrounding for less original characters, and impresses on the imagination quite as much of the heart of nature as of the heart of man or woman. Indeed, the characters of these novel stories move about upon these mountains as the specks they are in a tremendous sweep and expanse of light, valley, heavens and earth. Their doings are subordinated to the doings of the mountains that gave them birth! We grow to know them as a small, incidental part of the great rocks and chasms, seas of trees and huge shoulders of giant hills that color the whole atmosphere with a strange mysterious haze, and make a man or a woman to seem an insignificant point, yet the point of intense passion, in a wild of background.

Whatever this art may be, it is without doubt a new method of treatment. We have had descriptions of scenery of every grade until it is a relief to plunge into a novel which has not a line of description from end to end! But this book holds the mind in strange submission to the scenery, and makes it almost consider the character an intrusion! The author seems to have breathed the inspiration of that elevated atmosphere on to her pages. Yet she is not lacking in plot, plan, incident, interest. She gives us heroic, generous souls, triumphing simply and surely over themselves and others, but overall, the shadow of a cloud. Even as the poor dumb creatures die, and starve and thirst and are preyed upon, and sink, bleeding and exhausted, in the snow, inexorable law giving the strongest and cunningest first place, so these, poor, ignorant, half-brute people, with wild instincts of self-preservation, yet noble impulses of generosity even to the death, seem bound by a law as inevitable, to chiefly suffer, to hunger after something better, and to starve; to have dim hopes of finer intellectual growth, and to thirst; to feel strange throes of human love and passion, but to sink, stricken to the heart, in the cold snow of a destiny, fitted to their condition, and invincible in its merciless overthrow of what is weak, but beautiful, dull, but heroic, struggling, but vanquished! Melancholy is the key-note of land and people, as portrayed here; yet an infinite sweetness and a vague sense of diviner things; a plodding on in a round of duty; yet a singular broadening of the spiritual, not the intellectual side of the nature. All is disheartening, as the pessimistic nature must ever be; yet all appeals to reason, saying, "why should it not be so; and where is the remedy?" In looking into a large tank of different kinds of fish recently, we observed the big ones deliberately catch and eat the little ones, despite their struggles. We watched them with a dull, strange ache at the heart. Here was Nature; fierce, selfish, merciless, calm, irresistible, in the midst of her self-preservation! We turned away with souls depressed. The fact, the fact of the strange plan, was indisputable. Miss Murfree seems to have had some such vision when, in the midst of her great hills, she saw ignorance, weakness, sorrow, as the small fish of a greater power.

MARION Harland has done so much to alleviate the cares of housekeeping with her various practical and useful books on cookery and the general arrangements of domestic life, that when with a little sweeter and more confidential tone she gives us a lot of long, familiar chats with mothers, in her new book called "Common Sense in the Nursery," we cannot help feeling that the dear babies have found a new and wise friend who can add to the happiness of their infant condition, and suggest a delightful number of jolly things to help them exist. For all babies know that it is no end of hard work to begin life and hold on to it in a pleasurable way; what with so many little pains and aches, tumbles and knocks, colds and colics, fendish teeth and sleeplessness and hunger! So will they bless one who can teach their young and inexperienced mothers what *not* to do, for most young mothers want to do so much; and alas! as baby deplores, she so often overdoes the whole thing!

This book, bound strongly in brown linen, by Charles Scribner's Sons, is just the thing for such. Why, the author seems to have forgotten nothing! She speaks of baby's bath; when, where and how he should sleep; his day-nap; his nurse; his home in winter; when he is abroad in winter; the precocious baby—photographing him; how he must go to the country, and if he must stay in town, how to feed him, and when; in fact, his whole, small, important, sweet life is a matter of comment, advice and forethought, and all written in a happy "talky" way, that seems like just a friendly conversation with "Mamma." Price, \$1.

"HYPERÆSTHESIA" is the title chosen by Mary Conger for a novel published by Forde, Howard and Hulbert. It is an effort to show up the self-delusion of a sham invalid, who exacts from every one the supremest attention; wears out the life of her devoted relatives, and finally by a series of experiments by which actual is substituted for imagined pain, awakens to the true sense of her good health, throws off her false weakness, and becomes a sensible, amiable woman. The plot of the story is a weak one; the characters with hardly an exception, equally uninteresting, and the incidents, stretched emotions and useless, unreasonable and impracticable twistings of "honor" in the hero, neither ennobling nor twisting. The effort to portray an exacting and selfish woman who poses as an invalid until she nearly believes in her invalidism, is rather

striking, because we all have this sort of creature "In our list, who never would be missed," and it is a pleasing thing to get a little sarcastic fancy about them; but on the whole it would hardly pay anybody to give the book the time which might be better employed.

LYRICS, by Richard Watson Gilder, is a very handsomely printed volume of 250 pages, highly calendered paper and with the most careful arrangement of type and ornamental pieces. The cover design by George R. Halm, is one of the best this artist has made, simple and effective. The reading matter is divided into Lyrics, Ballads, Sonnets, Odes and Meditative Poems.

If Mr. Gilder has ever created any admirers of his verses, attracted possibly by poems not embraced in this collection, they will experience disappointment in the volume before us. There is the spirit of ambition running through these pieces that aspires to a rhythmic and sentimental perfection, but the ambition is thwarted, the rhythm broken and the sentiment destroyed by jerky metre, strained rhyme and a too evident effort in the use of words. It is fatal to successful work for an imaginative mind to seek the higher planes of poetry.

Of the subjects of these poems there is little to be said, for there is nothing new in their conception, no new situations, no new manner of looking at old thoughts, no new personages introduced, no new frames that would make old pictures still interesting to us, nothing, absolutely nothing that we can single out as calculated to inspire a new idea; there are no couplets that linger in the memory, no line that brings a whole history to the mind. There is a thought borrowed from Dean Swift, an imitation of Dobson, a terrible satire on one of Aldrich's sweetest verses, a smattering of Walt Whitman and a reaching out after Bunner; altogether the book is not pleasing. Scribner & Sons, N. Y., \$1.75.

ANOTHER volume of poems and entirely different to that we have just considered, is entitled "Oberon and Puck," written by Miss Helen Gray Cone. It is a collection of sprightly and entertaining verses, having no higher aim than to amuse and accomplishing this mission in a satisfactory and thorough manner.

Miss Cone is a good writer, she uses smooth and easy language, her satire is pointed without being vicious, and her wit has more pith than that of woman generally has. One or two of the poems approach the metaphysical, but in a very timid way, while the others very cleverly avoid any conflict with the more difficult phases of existence. The author's similes are well made, her references are good and her ideas are original, there is no groping after a word and no distressing attempts at rhyme.

The book is published by Cassell & Co., N. Y., and printed and bound in their usual neat manner.

"OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN: the Lord's Prayer in a series of Sonnets," by Wm. C. Richards, is the title of one of Lee & Shepard's late publications. It numbers but thirty pages but within that small compass it has a choice collection of symbolic drawings well conceived and well executed in the main. The first phrase, "Our Father in Heaven," illustrated by Miss Tucker, is one of the most charming of the number, while those of Mrs. Jessie Curtis Shepherd are the most noticeable thereafter. All of the drawings by this lady are worthy of careful study though the tiresome effect of the restraining wave shown in "On Earth as it is in Heaven," is rather unpleasant. The water is made to cling about the arm of the struggler as though it might be a tangible band. One by Miss Ellen Oakford is good and that of Miss Jessie McDermott is fair. "For thine is the Kingdom," &c., by Edmund H. Garrett has a fine effect, as has also his title page.

HARPER'S MONTHLY for December, while containing many noticeable and worthy pages can hardly compare artistically with the magnificent issue of last Christmas; had we not that for comparison, however, we should be able to find nothing to criticise in the present number. The opening chapter is seasonable and interesting telling the story of the Nativity in Art and freely illustrated from the paintings of Della Robbia, Ghirlandajo, Luini, Correggio, Giotto, Durer, Murillo and Bougereau, with a frontispiece from that great Raphael in the Pitti Gallery. The article is rather an argument for Christianity than for art, and in this falls below the standard that it should have had. A sketch of the life of Leon Bonvin with several of his simple and effective works makes entertaining reading. "The Ritu Sahara or Round of the Seasons," translated by Edwin Arnold is beautifully illustrated and really the noticeable contribution of the month. Wy-ern Moat, written and illustrated by Geo. H. Boughton, will attract some attention on that account, while the Madonna of the Tubs and a farce entitled The Garroters, are quite pleasing.

A VERY interesting and instructive work by Henrietta Christian Wright, has been published by Scribner's Sons, N. Y., entitled "Children's Stories in American History," and follows, in a pleasing and instructive manner, the birth, discovery and growth of our country up to the time of the Revolution. The book is not alone for children, but may be most profitably read by older people as well; it gives the startling incidents in our history in chronological order, but without any other connection, each being treated in a chapter by itself. Bilboa, de Soto, Vespucci, Columbus, Pontiac and the Revolution, are done up in short but instructive lessons.

The printing and binding are noticeable and the illustrations serve their purpose.

"THE POPULAR SPEAKER" comprising fresh selections in Poetry and Prose, Humorous, Pathetic, Patriotic, for reading clubs, school declamation, home and public entertainments, &c., of Lee & Shepard, is known wherever a school or an elocutionist is known in this country, and the melting of four of these little volumes into the form of one large one, neatly and substantially bound in cloth, with an index and a list of all the preceding volumes, makes a handy and entertaining collection. There is the usual list of regulation pieces found in the catalogue of every conscientious speaker or reader, the blood curdling, the thrilling, the simply ecstatic and the mildly, inoffen-

sively sentimental, then, too, there are many new selections, some that have not found their way into such society before.

FROM the same firm comes No. 14 of the now very popular "Reading Club," a little pamphlet which contains, like its predecessors, fifty selections in prose and poetry. Edited by George M. Baker, it, like all the others, possesses the rare merit of new and un worn pieces, suitable for public or private reading, and whether used as intended, for a delightful encyclopedia of charming bits of song or eloquence for oral delivery, or simply as a catch-up book to enjoy, the editor and publishers have done a pleasant work.

FIVE-MINUTE DECLAMATIONS, selected by Walter K. Fobes, and published by Lee & Shepard, is another volume for schools and colleges, and contains a very judicious and instructive collection of the best paragraphs from our most prominent public speakers. Daniel Webster, of course—and properly—is extensively quoted, and Story, Winthrop, Everett, Blaine, Lincoln, Curtis, Beecher, Choate, Phillips, Bayard, and a host of other orators, are drawn upon.

"THE Hunter's Hand-Book," a handy volume, nicely printed and neatly bound, is issued by Lee & Shepard, and contains hints, directions and recipes for camp cooking, and a list of all the essentials of hunting life, from the gun to the frying-pan. To read it is an education in the art and sport of the gay, yet arduous life of the professional or amateur hunter; and no man who takes it in his pocket when he starts for the woods, but will gain from it valuable and easily conned information.

A FRENCH THEATRICAL MUSEUM.—It is not a little curious that one of the most interesting of the many Museums of Paris is scarcely known either to the inhabitants of the city or to the strangers within its gates. Nor is it described adequately in any of the numberless guide-books which make life miserable to the traveler. And this is the more curious in that the museum is situated almost in the exact center of the strangers' quarter, and in that the objects collected in it are likely to be of especial interest to that very large proportion of the visitors to Paris who are attracted there by the variety and charm of its theatrical entertainments. This museum is attached to the library of the Opera, and it is now installed in the majestic left wing of M. Garnier's masterpiece. The Opera is perhaps the most characteristic monument of the Second Empire. Its bold magnificence and its showy splendor are thoroughly typical of the time when it was planned. By imperial edict the building was begun about ten years before the imperial power was broken. The architect, by order, designed a stately pavilion to serve as a private entrance for the imperial party. In this pavilion there was a spacious reception-room for the Empress; there were smaller rooms for the suite; and there was even ample accommodation for the escort of cavalry which guarded the imperial carriage. Access was had to this pavilion by a carriage-way which curved up gracefully from the level of the surrounding street, so that the imperial opera-goers, when once they had alighted from their state-coaches, would have only a few steps to walk to the imperial box. But before the Opera was completed the Empire was finished. In the new Republic the chief of State had no use for the imperial pavilion with its carriage-way and its reception-room. At the Opera the President of the Republic had, in fact, just what Charles X. once declared that he, like any other Frenchman, had at the Théâtre Français—only a seat in the stall. There was no one to pass through the imperial entrance or to occupy the imperial pavilion. It happened that the space reserved in the Opera for the library and the archives was ample and commodious, but very difficult of access, as it was close up under the lofty roof. The eye of the archivist, M. Charles Nutter, fell upon the imperial pavilion, and he rested not until he had succeeded in getting its useless splendors made over to him for the more accessible display of the chief treasures of the library and the archives.—*Brander Matthews, in the Magazine of Art, for December.*

WHAT SCIENCE DOES FOR THE ARTS.—Let me take a single example of how even a petty manufacture improved by the teachings of science affects the comforts and enlarges the resources of mankind. When I was a boy the only way of obtaining a light was by the tinder-box with its quadruple materials, flint and steel, burned rag or tinder, and a sulphur-match. If everything went well, if the box could be found and the air was dry, a light could be obtained in two minutes; but very often the time occupied was much longer, and the process became a great trial to the serenity of temper. The consequence of this was, that a fire or a burning lamp was kept alight through the day. Old Gerard, in his "Herbal," tells us how certain fungi were used to carry fire from one part of the country to the other. The tinder-box long held its position as a great discovery in the arts. The *pyritivale igniaria* of the Romans appears to have been much the same implement, though a little ruder than the flint and steel which Philip the Good put into the collar of the Golden Fleece in 1429 as a representation of high knowledge in the progress of the arts. It continued to prevail till 1833, when phosphorus-matches were introduced, though I have been amused to find that there are a few venerable ancients in London who still stick to the tinder-box, and for whom a few shops keep a small supply. Phosphorus was no new discovery, for it had been obtained by an Arabian called Bechel in the eighth century. However, it was forgotten, and was rediscovered by Brandt, who made it out of very stinking materials in 1669. Other discoveries had, however, to be made before it could be used for lucifer-matches. The science of combustion was only developed on the discovery of oxygen a century later. Time had to elapse before chemical analysis showed the kind of bodies which could be added to phosphorus so as to make it ignite readily. So it was not till 1833 that matches became a partial success. Intolerably bad they then were, dangerously inflammable, horribly poisonous to the makers, and injurious to the lungs of the consumers. It required another discovery by Schrötter, in 1845, to change poisonous wax into innocuous red-brick, phosphorus in order that these defects might be remedied and to give us the safety-match of the present day.—SIR LYON PLAYFAIR, in *Popular Science Monthly* for December.